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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: THE GODFATHER OF OYO STATE CHOOSES HIS MAN

REF: LAGOS 661

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (C) Summary. Oyo State strongman Lamidi Adedibu and current Oyo State Governor Christopher Alao-Akala have ended the feud between them. In return for the old man's support for his 2007 gubernatorial bid, Akala has promised to share some government funds with Adedibu, who, in turn, will use the funds to buttress his position as the fulcrum of Oyo politics. Although Adedibu has now anointed Akala as his preferred candidate, anti-Adedibu forces will attempt to weaken the septuagenarian's hold on Oyo politics. Theirs will be an uphill climb. The Adedibu-Akala alliance is formidable and successfully opposing it will depend on much more than just reformist sentiment. End Summary.

Adedibu-Akala Feud Settled, for Now

12. (C) A feud had developed between Oyo strongman Lamidi Adedibu and current Oyo Governor Akala over the Governor's attempt to get the courts to declare his tenure--he came into office in early 2006, a full four-year term, thereby obviating a need for elections in 2007 (reftel). Adedibu had objected strongly to the court case. Rumors swirled that Akala would be the next impeachment victim of the Adedibu political machine, just as Akala's predecessor was. However, things took a dramatic twist when Adedibu publicly declared Akala as his candidate for the Oyo governorship. According to an Obasanjo insider, Adedibu is a close friend of President Obasanjo, who reportedly told Akala to cool his feud with Adedibu. Politically sentient, Akala obeyed. (Note: When Akala was appointed several months ago, Obasanjo counselled him not to be contumacious but to mollify Adedibu by giving the old man a liberal slice of government largesse. End note)

What Adedibu Wanted

13. (C) In late September, Professor Adeolu Durotoye of the University of Ibadan told Poloff that Adedibu had certain criteria in looking for a candidate to support for the Oyo governorship race. Adedibu's main interest, the professor said, would be the candidate's willingness to share some of the Governor's 65 million (approximately USD 500,000) security fund. The fund is budgeted to the Governor's office and does not require any accounting on how it is used. Adedibu's declaration of support for Akala indicated Akala had promised a share to Adedibu, Durotoye noted.

¶4. (C) Former Oyo Governor and Alliance for Democracy (AD) member Lam Adesina told Poloff that the forces against Adedibu are coalescing. While Adesina believes the opposition will regain the governorship in Oyo State, he admitted there was no consensus opposition candidate to run against Akala. Wale Ojo-Lanre, head of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in Oyo State, also predicted a stop Adedibu campaign, although he too did not identify a specific candidate.

¶5. (C) Comment: After his failed attempt to win a four-year term and thus postpone elections, Akala had little choice but to dance with Adedibu. Although a Machiavellian arrangement, the Adedibu-Akala marriage has strengths. It also has a bevy of enemies hoping to see it crash. There are a fair amount of candidates for the Oyo State governorship, including the Oyo State Deputy Governor and the Lagos Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget. They all give lip service to joining forces to wrest Oyo from Adedibu's grasp. But thus far, opposition unity has been more conceptual than concrete. Despite the customary effervescence that characterizes opposition figures early in the electoral season, the cynical Adedibu-Akala tandem, under the mast of the PDP, will be difficult to beat in 2007. End Comment.

BROWNE